

"Now is not the time for the Congress of the United States to be second-guessing our commanders in the field and second-guessing our commander in chief"

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence delivered the following remarks today on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in opposition to H.Con.Res. 248, the "Afghanistan War Powers Resolution," a resolution that would direct the President of the United States to withdraw U.S. Armed Forces from Afghanistan:

"I thank the distinguished Ranking Member of the Committee [Armed Services] and the Chairman of the Committee [House Armed Services] for their words and efforts today. I think the gentleman from Ohio [Rep. Dennis Kucinich] knows I respect his passion, but I rise in strong opposition to this resolution today. And I believe that it should be opposed because H. Con. Res. 248, directing the president, pursuant to the war powers resolution, to remove United States armed forces from Afghanistan is not supported by the law, it is not supported by the facts, and it is not supportive of our troops. It should be opposed. Let me speak to each of those issues.

"First with regard to the facts. The war powers resolution requires the president to notify Congress within a specific time of committing forces. Its constitutionality has been questioned over the years. This is a matter of clear public record. The gentleman cites the Constitution frequently. There is great constitutional debate about the very foundation of that legislation. But specifically, and I believe the distinguished Chairman has made this point several times during the debate, the powers that are being cited here only apply in moments where there has not been a declaration of war or statutory authorization for the use of force.

"I was here on September 11. I was here for the debates, Madam Speaker, over the resolution authorizing the use of force in Afghanistan. Therefore, I believe this resolution is out of order. While I don't raise a procedural motion on that basis, I think it's worth noting.

"Secondly, I think this resolution is not supported by the facts. I just returned from a bipartisan delegation trip to Kabul and Kandahar. I met with General McChrystal. Stanley McChrystal is the commander of ISAF [International Security Assistance Force]. I met with our soldiers at Camp Eggers. Went out to Afghanistan, and I have strongly supported President Obama's decision to send reinforcements into Afghanistan. The sense that we receive from our military leaders in Afghanistan, from the Afghani military and political leaders, and most importantly from our soldiers on the ground, is that we

are leaning into the fight. We are providing our soldiers with the resources and reinforcements they need to succeed and come home safe.

"Now is not the time for the Congress of the United States to be second-guessing our commanders in the field and second-guessing our commander in chief. I believe, based on what I have seen and heard within the last month and a half in Afghanistan, that we have the right strategy, we have the right tactics, and we ought to continue to proceed on the course that we are proceeding on.

"We are talking about real lives. I can't help but reflect on the experience of having been just north of Kandahar where we visited with the governor of the Arghandab River area. He spoke about the Taliban being on the run. You know, Kandahar, there is an old proverb that says he who controls Kandahar controls Afghanistan. The Taliban was in effect born in Kandahar. This spring there is, as is evidenced on the evening news, there is an effort by the Taliban to reclaim that historic city. But as I talked to the governor of the Arghandab River province, he said that the only thing that the Taliban has anymore with population is threats. They don't have popular appeal, or so he told me. The very idea that U.S. Forces, or forces in the NATO coalition, would precipitously withdraw would leave a vacuum in which the Taliban would readily flow.

"It has been discussed here eloquently by Congressman Duncan Hunter, who wore the uniform in harm's way, that vacuum would not just be filled by the Taliban, but by their evil twin, al Qaeda, to no doubt to nefarious effect.

"I think this resolution is wrong on the law. I think it's wrong on the facts. But lastly, let me just say, I believe it's also not supportive of our troops. It's impossible for me, in the many trips that I have made downrange to visit soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan, it's impossible for me to meet with those soldiers without being profoundly inspired. I will acknowledge the gentleman from Ohio [Rep. Dennis Kucinich] has spoken in glowing terms about those in uniform and I do not suggest that he has done otherwise.

"But I believe with all my heart that a resolution of this nature in the midst of a moment when we are, in fact, providing our soldiers with the reinforcements and the resources to be successful in Afghanistan has the potential of having a demoralizing effect on the very men and women who separated from their families and in harm's way are doing freedom's work. And so I believe this resolution, however intended, should be opposed.

It's not supported in the law, it's not supported by the facts, and it's not supportive of our troops and I believe it should be rejected."

NOTE: Congressman Pence visited Afghanistan the day after Christmas and blogged about his visit with the troops, commanders and Afghani leaders [HERE](#) .